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[Disrupt or be Disrupted](#)

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by *Cmdr. Hassan Tetteh, Lead, Futures and Innovation, Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery*

Disruption is about experience. I went back to my undergrad as visiting alumni recently and recognized immediately much had changed from my own experience in the early 1990s. Many students talked with me and shared their views about the way campus life had changed and how much their experience was now shaped by technology in a way that was very different from my time on campus as a pre-med student.



Mobile apps provide Sailors, Marines and their families a place find health information on their phone instead of going to Google

One example related to how students interact with health care. As an undergrad, I visited the campus student health center with questions. When I asked what students do today when they have a health question or concern, 100% of them answered they first visit the Internet for information and then will likely 'Google' the condition they think they have. The students' responses were surprising. Convenience through 'virtual care' was accepted over a face-to face appointment. Certainly in my own thoracic surgery practice many patients tell me they occasionally search for medical information on the Internet. However, the students said the Internet was their first resource for information. This was a new experience.

Military historians often identify three reasons for military misfortunes: failure to learn, failure to anticipate, and failure to adapt, leading to ultimate failure. Indeed, I learned the students, aged 18-25, have a completely different experience with health care now. This same age-group comprises much of our current Navy and Marine Corps active duty workforce and knowing what to anticipate in terms of how they access health care is important. As Lead for Futures and Innovation at Navy Medicine, I'm often asked about the future. The future is inherently unknowable and I learned long ago that predicting the future is difficult. I've also observed failure to anticipate the future leads to problems and the failure to take reasonable measures to adapt to a trend can be especially hazardous. Our active duty military workforce, made up largely of young adults, now engages health care in a completely different way, and it was clear from the responses of the students I met with that we must creatively disrupt and adapt our current care delivery experience to avoid failing our Sailors and Marines.

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Like it or not, disruption is already occurring in health care and my visit with the students at my undergrad proved this generation now has a unique experience, influenced by technology, that is very different than any other experience from previous generations. Recently, Vice Admiral Faison, our Navy surgeon general, highlighted key trends that drive health care choice today. He included convenience, experience of care and technology as among the most significant factors and outlined how Navy Medicine would adapt.



Innovation in technology is one of the three key trends identified by the Navy surgeon general

The undergraduate students I met with all had smart phones and could readily look up information on virtually any health topic- there was no need for them to visit the campus health center with a question like I did years ago.

Navy Medicine has always focused on readiness and our forward thinking military medical leaders have proven that we learn, anticipate, and adapt with expertise that yielded unparalleled combat survival over the past decade. Our Sailors and Marines are now empowered with more information than in any other time in history and it will be their capital resource of ingenuity, creativity, and discovery that will lead to improved outcomes and experience of care. It is no wonder then that Vice Admiral Faison was recently named the [Disruptive Women in Health Care, Man of the Month](#). Navy Medicine is working to improve readiness, outcomes and the experience of care for this and future generations. Disruption is about experience and not a ‘third next available’ appointment.

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